

Russia with reference to service towards promotion and pension and furlough regulations. Officers permitted to proceed to Russia from India who may succeed in qualifying as interpreters, will receive a gratuity of £200 and a further sum of £20 towards the cost of the journey to Russia, plus half of the consolidated sum of £32 or £42 which is allowed to officers who have proceeded from England for travelling expenses to and from St. Petersburg or Moscow, as the case may be.

WORK FOR THE NEW WAR MINISTER.

Our service contemporary the *Broad Arrow and Naval and Military Gazette* directs attention to the matters which will probably be pressed upon the consideration of the new Secretary of State for War. Our contemporary is quite right in stating that the alteration of the regulation regarding the extended length of foreign service is the most important subject. The present regulations press heavily upon officers of the medical staff in the matter of health, and the length of foreign tours of service should, in our opinion, be reduced to what it was before the order for prolonged tours abroad came into force—viz., the term of continuous service abroad should not exceed five years, as recommended by Lord Camperdown's Committee. The amalgamation of the Army Medical Staff and Medical Staff Corps into a "Royal Medical Corps or Staff" is a reform that we have also always advocated, and it was recommended by Lord Morley's Committee.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

The Government of India have recommended that Dr. D. D. Cunningham, of the Indian Medical Service, who is Professor of Physiology in the Medical College, Calcutta, be given two more years in which to complete his scientific observations. It is well known that he has been engaged for a considerable time past in investigating the origin of cholera, with special relation to the bacillus theory, and it is alleged that his most recent researches on the comma bacilli in cholera are highly important. If so, the publication of his observations, as far as they have extended, would be very valuable at the present time.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE NOTIFICATION OF DISEASE.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I quite agree with Dr. Goodhart that the point he raises "is an important one to a large section of medical men." The case he refers to was a fatal case of diphtheria, the first intimation of which I received in the mortality return supplied to me by the district registrar. I of course at once made inquiries, found that three medical men had been "attending or called in to visit the patient," and wrote to them to ask why they had not certified the case to me. On receiving replies which satisfied me that there had been no intentional concealment of the case I reported to this effect to the sanitary committee, who decided at my recommendation to take no action in the matter. Dr. Goodhart seems to think that only one medical attendant is required to certify a case, and that he was not that one. The words of the Act are, however, perfectly clear: "Every medical practitioner attending on or called in to visit the patient, shall forthwith, on becoming aware that the patient is suffering from an infectious disease to which this section applies, send to the medical officer of health of the district a certificate stating," &c. As a matter of fact, if several medical men see a case and only one certifies it to the medical officer of health, the latter is quite satisfied, as he does not want more than one certificate of one case; but if neither of them certifies it he is bound to report them all to his committee as delinquents. Dr. Goodhart says, "I was further politely informed that as I had sinned in ignorance no action would be taken on this occasion—in other words, I must not be a bad boy again or I should receive a whipping."

In this I think he exactly describes the position, and as he has made it publicly known that he has neglected to certify a case of diphtheria which proved fatal my friendly advice to him is that he should take very great care to certify

any case of "notifiable" infectious disease that he may attend or be "called in to visit" in future.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

W. H. CORFIELD, M.A., M.D. Oxon.,
Medical Officer of Health for
St. George's, Hanover-square.

Savile-row, W., Sept. 27th, 1892.

FRACTURE AT THE SYMPHYSIS PUBIS WITHOUT INJURY TO BLADDER.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—The following may interest some of your readers. Some years since, when practising in Yorkshire, I was sent for to see a man (J. W—, aged forty); while sitting in a swing lowered down the face of a rock, working for stone, the rope broke and he was thrown down a great height, falling flat on his abdomen. I examined the man and found nothing wrong, except fracture at the symphysis pubis, the bones overriding one another. I had him placed in bed and passed a broad firm bandage round his body. He lay perfectly still for four weeks, and in twelve weeks was again at his work as a quarryman. One hour after his fall, to my great relief, he passed a good quantity of urine. On inquiry he told me that he emptied his bladder just before he got into the swing, thereby preventing rupture of the organ and saving his life. If men so engaged would only micturate before going up heights for similar work, many a life might be saved, as in J. W—'s case.—I am, Sirs, yours truly,

H. J. RICE, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S. Edin.

Sandbach, Cheshire, Sept. 24th, 1892.

"THE MIDWIVES' REGISTRATION BILL."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Mr. Rowland Humphreys' letter in THE LANCET of last Saturday may in the opinion of many of your readers require a reply from me, for your correspondent calls attention to what he thinks are "some errors I have fallen into." I did not forget that there was a delusive clause in the late Midwives' Bill by which a proof of a certain amount of knowledge was required before registration, but that it was a fair amount I certainly did not know and deny. The midwife's answer to the coroner, "that she had acted as a midwife for twenty years, and that as far as she knew she had never had anything amiss with any patient she had attended," would have been sufficient reason, had the Bill passed, to have placed her on the register of qualified midwives, and I too feel equally sure that her not wilful ignorance would also have been a sufficient reason with the jury to have prevented any punishment following her most reprehensible inaction and the lamentable result of her culpable, although not legal, ignorance. Your correspondent states that it might be desirable, as I suggest, that no midwife should be allowed to act except under the eye and the responsibility of a medical man, but adds, "who is to pay them? for it would be quite impossible for doctors to do all the cheap work thus thrown on them and live on the results." I differ from Mr. Humphreys. I think there are not only in London but in every town medical men who would not object adding to their daily list two or three or even half a dozen of such obstetric calls, and if the patient was too poor to pay for these needed visits the moderate fee of 2s. 6d. per visit should be defrayed, if a parish case, by the guardians, and if private, by the club or some such society as the London and Manchester, or other kindred society which provides medical aid for the industrial classes, and a very slight increase to their present very low rate of weekly payment would be sufficient. I should make my letter, even for a reply, too long did I enumerate the need and advantages and the saving of life that would result from these visits of the qualified practitioner (where a midwife had attended), who would see that the labour was progressing satisfactorily and that the convalescence was neither retarded nor prevented by dangerous or unusual symptoms; but assuredly it was far from my intention that the doctor should "bear" or even cover the misdeeds of the midwife or obstetric nurse, but on the contrary to prevent them. I opposed the late Bill because it appeared somewhat crude and unsatisfactory, but I admired the principles and desires that gave it birth, and from its ashes I look hopefully for such ripe legislation that will ensure increased safety and lessened suffering to the mothers of the poor and, at the same time, am not unmindful